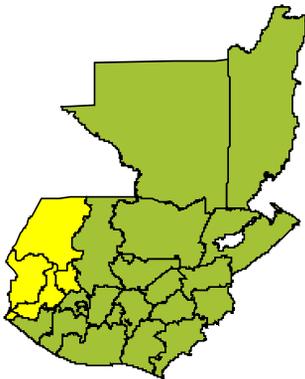


Country Context

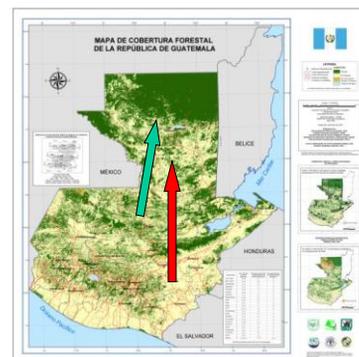
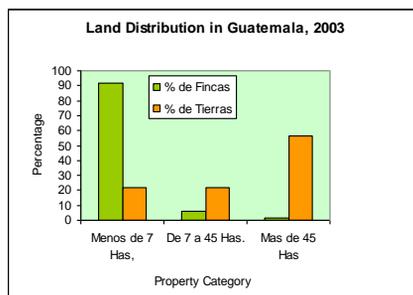


- 108,889 Km² and population of 12 million (60% indigenous and 61% rural)
- Cultural and natural diversity (24 ethnic groups)
- Poverty affects 56.19% of population (77.32% of indigenous population and 81.36% of the rural population)
- 82% of energy needs met through fuelwood (FAO 2000).

Impact of state policies for territorial control on community forest management.

- Eviction from communal lands and destruction of local institutions for forest management.
- Use of public lands for colonization projects in forest areas to minimize agrarian conflict.
- Centralization of decision-making within State entities, which ignore local and regional diversity.
- Lack of consultation with and participation by local peoples in the definition of forest policies.

Inequality in land distribution: Principle cause of the expanding agricultural frontier



- Unequal agrarian structure continues to influence forest and agrarian policies
- Deforestation about 90,000 ha/year

Principle Instruments of Forest Decentralization (1996 -)

Emphasis on regionalization

- Greater authority for forest regulation given to **Municipalities** (1996 Forest Law)
- Municipal Forest Offices (OFMs)
- Municipal Protected Areas
- Communal Forest Program (BOSCOM)
- Forest Incentives Program (PINFOR)

Highland communal forests under decentralization

- Proliferation of actors and interests: national and international projects
- Overlapping institutional scales: increase in authority and power for municipalities, NGOs, and other external entities.
- Insufficient recognition given to existing and local institutional arrangements.



Community experiences under decentralization

- Centralization of authority, not decentralization
- Co-optation of village-level management institutions and increased subordination to municipal governments
- Licenses formerly granted by local authorities now controlled by municipalities
- Municipalities changing the rules



Is “decentralization” working?

- Increased deforestation in some areas
- Breakdown of local and village-level institutions
- Capture of village-level resources by municipal elites
- Skepticism and withdrawal from governmental programs
- Increase in State power and control suppresses management initiatives by local groups, which are left with more responsibility and fewer benefits.



Lessons Learned

- Forest concessions work better than municipal licensing programs (Petén)
- Municipal Forest Offices (OFM) and Forest Incentive Programs (PINFOR), as well as NGOs and other partners, should support local capacity for forest administration
- Important to evaluate an legitimate local institutions that are currently working well (e.g Chiquimula), and improve those that aren't.
- Conception and process of forest sector decentralization should be broadened beyond the public sphere.



Lessons Learned

- Local management groups should have formal access to participate in forest policy decisions.
- The State should recognize and support community institutions for forest management without cooptation.
- Implement community – sanctioned policies to regularize communal lands, guaranteeing traditional access rights.

